

**Panel Meeting**  
**Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> April – 11am**  
**Holywood & Teams**

**Present:**

Lesa Kelly, Senior Engagement Officer  
(CHAIR)  
Jonathon Herdman, Planned Assets Manager  
Greg Murray, Senior Assets Officer  
Ashleigh Mulgrave, Tenant Engagement Officer  
Dean Kelly, Tenant Advocate  
2x Spafield Fold  
1x Ballyvarnet Lodge  
1x Carrickblacker Fold  
1x Clifton House  
2x Fergus Fold  
2x Gortgole Fold  
1x Knockbrook Manor  
1x White Glen  
1x Loopland Fold  
2x Butterfield Lodge  
2x Drumcor Court  
1x Claremont Court  
1x Scrabo Fold  
2x Spafield Fold  
1x Tobar Fold  
1x Tonic Fold  
1x Valley Fold  
1x Weavers Court  
1x Cromlyn Fold  
1x Rathain Fold

**Apologies:**

Bobby McConnell, Tenant  
Board Member  
Isabelle McAuley, TEC  
Member  
2x Brownhill Fold  
1x Butterfield Lodge  
1x Rosseden Drive

<b>1.</b>	<p><b>Welcome and Housekeeping</b></p> <p>Lesa Kelly introduced herself as Senior Engagement Officer and Chair of today's Panel Meeting. She opened by welcoming and thanking everyone in attendance. Lesa noted the apologies received.</p> <p>Today, we are continuing with our themed Panel Meeting format. This quarter, the focus is on Planned Maintenance and the Staying Put Service.</p> <p>Lesa reminded everyone to switch their phones to silent and noted that no fire drills are scheduled today.</p> <p>Lesa explained that everyone should have received in advance of this meeting a copy of the Agenda, the February Easy Read scorecard and previous minutes. This is a public forum, and we would like to remind everyone that we are unable to discuss any personal or scheme specific issues due to GDPR. Everyone will have the opportunity to discuss personal/scheme issues with a member of staff before or at the end of the meeting. If you have a first time repair, please call the office to report. Lesa gave a round of introductions of Radius staff.</p> <p>Lesa advised that we have updated our Panel Member Pack and everyone present will receive a copy of this. The Panel Member Pack goes into more detail about the topics we discuss during Panel Meetings such as KPIs (Key</p>
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	<p>Performance Indicators), what your role is and what to expect at Panel Meetings, along with Terms of Reference and some Housekeeping. Providing a Panel Member Pack was a recommendation from the TP Accreditation and will help provide more context when joining our Panel Meetings.</p> <p>All actions were agreed, and the group was happy to move on with the days agenda.</p>	
<p><b>2.</b></p>	<p><b>Performance Scorecard</b></p>	
	<p><b>Assets</b></p> <p>The first item on the agenda was the Easy Read Scorecard, beginning with the Assets section.</p> <p>Emergency repairs, which should be responded to by contractors within 24 hours, is sitting at 95.34%.</p> <p>Urgent repairs, which should be responded to by contractors within 4 working days, is 92.4%.</p> <p>Routine repairs, which should be responded to by contractors within 20 working days, is 87.16%.</p> <p>We are pleased to say all 3 figures have improved since the last panel meeting. This shows the pressure our Assets Team are putting onto the MTC contractors to ensure they meet targets and ensure jobs are completed on time.</p> <p>We understand that some jobs don't be completed on time and there can be a number of reasons for this including requiring multiple tradesmen involved in the job, special parts needing ordered, access issues or incorrect job logged at the beginning with the customer service centre.</p> <p><b>Health &amp; Safety</b></p> <p>Our target to ensure all assessments and paperwork are completed on time is 100%.</p> <p>Emergency lighting &amp; fire risk assessments are sitting at 100%, with gas safety out of target due to an ongoing access issue, and the fire alarm servicing is due to paperwork not uploaded in time when figures were collated.</p> <p>Lesia asked at this stage if there were any questions in regards to the Repairs section of the scorecard. Everyone was happy to move on at this point.</p> <p><b>Communities</b></p> <p>The next section of the Scorecard focused on Communities, with Lesia giving an update on Tenancy Checks and Relets.</p> <p>The target for the financial year is 25% of general needs properties, and by end of February the figure was 15%.</p> <p>Tenancy checks are carried out to ensure homes are allocated properly and meet the needs of an individual, prevent fraud and unlawful subletting. They are also an opportunity to ensure tenants have all the support they need, including financial support, and that they are on all the benefits they are entitled to.</p>	

	<p>For relets, the target is that a Radius property is relet within 35 days. Within General Needs and Independent Living Schemes, relets are sitting on average 42/43 days. Radius' aim is to get houses ready to be let as soon as possible due to the housing crisis and demand for housing as well as generate income.</p> <p>A member of the group asked what happens after someone is selected at random for a tenancy check? Lesa explained that tenancy checks are a routine part of managing social housing in Northern Ireland and are carried out to make sure homes are being lived in by the people they are intended for. These checks may take place from time to time and usually involve a review of tenancy details. The aim of tenancy checks is to help protect social housing, support fairness for those waiting for a home, and ensure tenants continue to receive the right support, with any concerns followed up sensitively and in line with agreed policies.</p> <p>Another member asked whether the 43-day relet time represented an average, noting that some properties remain vacant for longer periods. Lesa confirmed that the figure quoted is an average and explained that properties vacant beyond this timeframe are often classified as hard-to-let homes.</p> <p><b>Corporate Services</b></p> <p>The next item on the Easy Read Scorecard, Corporate Services. So far in the financial year there was 135 official complaints were received across the 8 different departments within Radius, with the majority being Assets related. Following Assets, would be complaints within the Communities department.</p> <p>91.7% of those complaints were responded to within the policy requirement and 42.2% of those complaints received, or 11 complaints, were upheld. This means that after an investigation was carried out the complaint was found to be valid and Radius were at fault and/or mistakes were made, with learnings required to prevent/reduce the complaint from happening again.</p> <p>Lesla asked at this stage if there were any questions in regards to the Corporate Services section of the scorecard.</p> <p>A member asked whether there was a breakdown of Assets related complaints to determine if a high number were coming from a particular area. Lesa confirmed that this information is monitored and broken down by area, with Assets Managers having oversight of complaint trends and working closely with contractors to address any issues. Lesa also advised that she would raise the recurring concerns with the relevant Asset Manager for the area to ensure they are aware of the issues within the scheme.</p>	<p>LK</p>
<p><b>3.</b></p>	<p><b>Tenant Engagement</b></p>	
	<p><b>Tenant Panel Member Pack</b></p> <p>The Tenant Panel Member Handbook has been updated this year. When a tenant registers to attend a panel meeting for the first time, they will receive a copy of the handbook either digitally or in paper format.</p> <p>The handbook provides key information on the role of a panel member and how members work together. It also explains how the panel contributes to service performance across Communities, Assets and Corporate services. Towards the back of the handbook, performance targets are clearly set out, along with a section on meetings, key terms that are regularly used, and a glossary of acronyms and definitions.</p>	

### **Tenant Executive Committee update**

The next item on the agenda is an update on the Tenant Executive Committee (TEC). Within the TEC booklet we have added a paragraph to include:

- If any tenant wishes to join the Radius Board or Radius Foundation as a tenant representative, they must be a current member of the TEC for a minimum amount of one year to ensure good governance.

We have some movement within the TEC and are delighted to share that Gillian Hill, who has been a member of the TEC, is going to be joining the Board of the Radius Foundation. This is a great opportunity to be involved in, Gillian will be making a difference to our tenants' lives by supporting initiatives, enhancing tenant engagement, promoting community-led projects and tenant support.

We're also delighted to welcome a new member to the Tenant Executive Committee (TEC) – Heather Le Clere from Loopland Fold, Belfast. Heather has agreed to join the TEC, which is made up of tenants from across Northern Ireland. As a member, she will contribute to wider strategic discussions, including helping us to hold contractors to account and informing decisions and following the actions within the Tenant Engagement Structure.

### **Tenant Satisfaction Survey Now Complete**

A big thank you to the nearly 1,400 tenants who completed this survey. We hope to get the report through in the next few weeks and will ensure to keep you up to date on next steps.

### **Tenant Conference Roadshow**

This year there won't be a Tenant Conference, instead we are shaking things up by going on the road over the summer with the Radius Community Awards. Each scheme that submits a nomination will receive a special visit from either a member of staff, Radius Board or a Tenant Executive Committee member who will be acknowledging the fantastic contributions made by tenants and residents living within Radius communities.

## **4.0 Planned Assets Team Update**

Jonathan Herdman began by introducing himself as the Planned Assets Manager who manages the Planned Maintenance Programme for Radius. The Planned Maintenance Programme was outlined as a proactive, long-term approach to investment, focused on keeping homes safe, warm and in good condition. Investment decisions are data-led and based on stock condition and need, rather than reactive repairs.

Targeted investment is being made in specific schemes where multiple components have reached end of life. Jonny listed the specific schemes that are noted for works. The total value of this work is approximately £8.4m (including fees) which was promoted within the April Newsletter. Key drivers for prioritisation include asset condition, fire safety compliance, and risks associated with damp, disrepair and tenant health.

Rolling programmes delivered across multiple properties were also outlined. These include core programmes including: kitchens (£1.0m), bathrooms (£1.0m), windows and doors including thermal upgrades (£1.5m), cyclical

re-decoration (£1.0m) and external maintenance (£1.0m).

Safety and compliance works include fire doors and fire stopping (£1.0m) and CWST water safety works (£1.0m). Building services programmes cover commercial heating (£2.0m), domestic heating (£0.5m) and lifts (£0.5m), with additional investment in communal doors (£0.2m), major repairs (£0.5m) and adaptations (£0.02m).

The total value of cyclical and ongoing programmes is approximately £12.6m (including fees).

The overall Planned Maintenance Programme represents a total investment of approximately £21 million for 2026/27.

Jonny explained that programming decisions are primarily driven by data gathered through stock condition surveys which assess the condition and lifespan of key components within homes. It was explained that previously was a rolling five-year rolling programme, but from this year the survey will take place annually with all properties receiving a stock condition survey which will be carried out by Savills. Tenants will receive an initial letter, after which Savills will contact tenants directly to arrange surveys.

This information is combined with other data sources, including fire risk assessments, repairs history such as recurrent breakdowns, compliance requirements, damp and complaints data, local staff knowledge, and available budget. All data is reviewed together, with schemes prioritised based on risk, particularly safety and compliance, and the condition of end-of-life components.

A member asked what happens if access cannot be gained to a property for a stock condition survey. It was explained that, while every effort is made to reschedule where possible, the programme cannot be delayed. Where a small number of properties cannot be accessed on a street or scheme, data is cloned from neighbouring properties that have been surveyed, as these are typically of a similar age and construction and are likely to be in comparable condition.

One member asked what the general lifespan of windows is within a general needs property. Jonny responded that this would depend on the type of window, but for a PVC window this would be up to 30 years. This would also be determined by our stock condition surveyors who attend, assess the windows and then send the report to Radius.

The Grenfell Tower tragedy was a pivotal moment for the housing sector in the UK and Ireland and fundamentally changed the way organisations approach fire safety. In response, services have had to evolve significantly, with a much stronger emphasis on fire risk assessment, compliance, assurance, and proactive investment in building safety. Fire safety is now embedded as a core organisational priority, influencing decision-making, investment programmes and service delivery to ensure homes are safe, risks are identified early, and residents can have confidence that their safety is being actively managed.

A tenant asked how local tenant knowledge is incorporated into decision-making and consultation particularly when planned works take place?

It was explained that there is significant consultation built into the programme.

Once a scheme is confirmed that they are included within the planned maintenance programme, early engagement takes place and once a contractor has been appointed tenants are informed and engagement and consultation with

tenants takes place at the outset, before works commence, and continues throughout the process, either through group sessions or one-to-one meetings as appropriate. Radius work closely with tenants who require additional support and partner with relevant stakeholders who are involved with tenants.

A member raised concerns that some fire doors within the scheme are heavy and difficult to open/close and alleged that this is indirect discrimination towards older persons to use, particularly those using wheelchairs or rollators. Jonathan Herdman advised that he would review the door closures in this scheme to assess whether adjustments could be made to improve ease of use while maintaining fire safety requirements.

A member of the group gave compliments to the new refurbishment at Cromlyn Fold.

A member raised an issue with the name of the schemes being called Independent Living (IL) as many people moving in aren't suitable to live there independently.

Lesa explained that at present, IL schemes are available to residents aged 55 and over. As part of the fundamental review of allocations which was discussed at the previous meeting, the existing model will be updated so that the IL schemes with a Scheme Co-ordinator on site will be for residents will be increased will be referred to as Independent Living Plus. This has not yet been approved by the NIHE.

Independent Living Plus will continue to provide self-contained homes for older people who are largely independent but would benefit from some on-site housing support, such as access to a scheme co-ordinator during office hours, an emergency alarm system, and optional communal activities. Standard Independent Living schemes (55+), also known as CAT 1, will remain in place for more active older people, offering self-contained accommodation with floating or visiting housing support, an emergency alarm system, and access to communal facilities. Ultimately, it is the decision of Health and Social Care professionals around a tenant's suitability to move into an IL Scheme.

Greg Murray introduced himself as Senior Assets Officer within the Staying Put Team which deals with helping tenants remain in their homes. He gave an overview of what his job entails and what the adaptations team can do.

The Radius Staying Put Service provides help and assistance with:

- Discussing grant and housing adaptation options with applicants
- Offering advice on how income and savings may affect a grant application, including a home consultation (often before referral to NIHE)
- Communicating with everyone involved, including the applicant, their family, NIHE Grants Office, Occupational Therapist, Architect, Planning, Building Control, and contractors
- Assisting the applicant with the selection of a contractor from the FMB list

We successfully deal with around 500 applications each year across Northern Ireland.

In terms of grants, A Disability Facilities Grant (DFG) in Northern Ireland is a means-tested grant from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) that helps pay for minor and major adaptations to a home so a disabled person can live there more safely and independently. Radius, and previously Fold Housing, have been working in partnership with NIHE for over 30 years, helping to assist

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	<p>tenants, private homeowners and private renters through our Staying Put Service to successfully apply for and obtain DFG home adaptations.</p> <p>Grants can vary from simple minor adaptations, such as installing a grab rail or converting a bathroom into a level-access shower or wet room, to major home adaptations, such as creating a ground-floor bedroom with a level-access shower room.</p> <p>Other examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Installing ramps or stairlifts</li> <li>• Widening doors for wheelchair access</li> <li>• Adding or adapting a downstairs bedroom or bathroom</li> <li>• Improving access to essential rooms (kitchen, bedroom, bathroom)</li> <li>• Adapting heating, lighting, or controls to make them easier to use</li> </ul> <p>How can someone apply for an adaptation?  Greg explained that you begin by contacting your local Health and Social Care Trust to request an Occupational Therapist (OT) assessment.  The OT will visit your home and assess what adaptations are necessary and appropriate for your needs.</p> <p>If the OT agrees that changes are needed, they will recommend specific adaptations (such as a stairlift, wet room, etc).</p> <p>You then apply for the grant through NIHE. They will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the OT report</li> <li>• Carry out a means test (depending on your situation)</li> <li>• Check that the proposed work is “reasonable and practicable” for your home</li> </ul> <p>What are the benefits?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes it easier for applicants to receive these grants with our assistance</li> <li>• Gives applicants greater independence and improved safety within their own homes</li> <li>• Reduces social care costs by preventing accidents at home, reducing hospital admissions, and preventing placements into care homes</li> <li>• Demonstrates a social value commitment from Radius Housing to continue supporting tenants and private homeowners to live independently for as long as possible</li> </ul> <p>Greg let the group know that they will be sending a flyer about the adaptations team to our tenants and more information can be found on the Radius Housing website explaining the Staying Put Service for HomeOwners/Renters and for Radius tenants <a href="#">Adaptations   Radius Housing</a>.</p>	
<b>5.0</b>	<b>AOB</b>	
	<p>A member asked why fire extinguishers had been removed from communal areas. It was explained that tenants are not trained to use the different types/colours of fire extinguishers and, for safety reasons, the correct action in the event of a fire is to evacuate the building immediately.</p> <p>A member asked when their scheme, which has been put forward for redecoration, could expect this to take place? It was explained that the Planned Maintenance team will first review historic data, following which a Planned Officer will attend the scheme to carry out an assessment. Redecorations are progressing; however, they have not been a priority programme and are</p>	

	<p>therefore not being delivered on a large-scale basis at present. Where possible, works will be progressed as soon as assessments are completed.</p> <p>A member raised concerns regarding Laurel Hill Gardens Phase 2, noting that all trees within the area had been removed and seeking clarification on the reason for this. It was agreed that this would be followed up with the Development team to establish why the trees were removed. The Development Team noted that the trees were removed in accordance with the approved planning permission. No evidence was found to indicate that the trees were protected.</p> <p>A tenant asked whether carpets are going to be provided as part of redecoration works. It was explained that there is a move away from carpeting towards vinyl flooring where possible. In some cases, however, replacing flooring can be challenging, as changes to floor finishes may affect the operation of fire doors, potentially making them difficult to open or non-compliant with fire safety standards. Fire safety considerations therefore remain a key factor when determining suitable flooring options.</p> <p>A tenant asked about the policy regarding pets. It was confirmed that a pet policy is in place and that the Scheme Coordinator Officer (SCO) must be made aware of any pets. It was also clarified that responsibility for the care, behaviour and control of pets rests with the tenant.</p>	<b>LK</b>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Meeting End</b>	
	<p>Lesia thanked those who attended the meeting today. Meeting ended at 12:30pm.</p>	

